

*Saratoga Springs, NY* -- The New York StateWide Senior Action Council today honored Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) for his distinguished career in public service and his longtime commitment to protecting and strengthening Medicare and Social Security as well as fighting for other issues of importance to seniors. Hinchey received the award from the group during its 40th anniversary celebration in Saratoga Springs.

"I'm deeply humbled and honored to receive this distinguished reward from the New York StateWide Senior Action Council. I deeply appreciate all the critical work and advocacy that we've done together over the past years to protect and strengthen Medicare and Social Security," Hinchey said. "Throughout my two decades in Congress, I have fought for strong Medicare and Social Security programs and defended them from attacks. These programs have been incredibly efficient and effective for senior citizens and individuals with disabilities. They have saved countless lives, improved the health of our population, provided reliable retirement income, and protected many families from falling into poverty. The New York StateWide Senior Action Council has done an outstanding job of advocating for seniors, and I am delighted that they chose to honor me."

Over the last 47 years, Medicare has been an enormous success. Before Medicare, only 51 percent of Americans 65 and older had health care coverage. Today, thanks to Medicare, virtually all Americans 65 and older have health care coverage. In addition, Medicare has increased both seniors' health care and economic security.

In both 2011 and 2012, House Republicans passed a plan that fundamentally transforms Medicare from a guaranteed benefit program into a privatized voucher program for all those now under 55. The amount of the proposed voucher would grow more slowly than health care costs. As a result, according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, the House Republican plan would increase seniors' health care costs by thousands of dollars a year.

In contrast to the House Republican plan to turn Medicare into a voucher program, Hinchey and his fellow House Democrats are committed to preserving Medicare. Throughout his 20 years in office, Hinchey has fought vigorously to protect and strengthen Medicare. Along with his fellow Democrats, Hinchey has enacted several pieces of legislation to extend Medicare's solvency – most recently in the Affordable Care Act that extended solvency for an additional eight years. Hinchey will continue to work to strengthen Medicare's solvency and ensure that Medicare will be there for future generations. He is working to pass a measure to allow Medicare to negotiate the price of prescription drugs, which would save taxpayers \$156 billion over 10 years.

Additionally, Hinchey has been a staunch defender of Social Security -- fighting to protect the program from repeated efforts to privatize it and expose benefits to the risks of the stock market. He also helped lead the fight in Congress to provide an additional \$250 to Social Security beneficiaries when the program did not provide a cost of living adjustment in 2010 and 2011 and is working with his colleagues to adjust the program so that COLAs are granted more regularly to seniors who have seen medical costs increase more swiftly than their Social Security checks.

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